

REMARKS

Twenty-five claims were originally filed in the present Application. Claims 1, 2, 10, and 12-14 currently stand rejected. Claims 15-25 have been allowed. Claims 3-9 and 11 are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 3, 15, 11, and 20 are amended, and claims 1, 2, 10, and 12-14 are cancelled herein. Reconsideration of the Application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Oath/Declaration

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that the originally-filed oath or declaration is "defective". After conferring with the Examiner, Applicant has contacted the inventor to provide a substitute signed declaration. Applicant proposes to submit the substitute declaration as soon as that document can be obtained from the inventor.

Priority

In paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that Applicant "has not filed certified copies" of three European patent applications in which foreign priority is claimed. After conferring with the Examiner, Applicant has contacted the European foreign associate to obtain certified copies of the priority documents. Applicant proposes to submit the certified copies as soon as those documents can be obtained from the foreign associate.

Cancellation Of Rejected Claims

In the Office Action of January 12, 2005, the Examiner has indicated that claims 15-25 are allowed. The Examiner also indicates that claims 3-9 and 11 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1, 2, 10, and 12-14 remain rejected. Because of the Applicant's wish to expedite the allowance and issuance of the present Application, Applicant therefore refrains from further discussing the cited references, and instead, herein cancels currently rejected claims 1, 2, 10, and 12-14 without prejudice to thereby place the Application in condition for immediate allowance. Allowed independent claims 15 and 20 are amended herein to correct formal, grammatical errors and not for reasons of patentability.

The Applicant expressly states that the rejected claims are not cancelled or amended herein for reasons of patentability. The rejected claims are cancelled or amended solely to expedite the allowance and issuance of the Application. Furthermore, the Applicant also reserves the right to seek allowance of any additional claims in Applications that may claim priority in the present Application.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 13 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 3-9 and 11 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant therefore herein amends claims 3 and 11 in independent form to include the limitations of the corresponding base claim and any intervening claims, to thereby place claims 3 and 11 in condition for immediate allowance. In addition, claims 4-9 depend from amended independent claim 3, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.

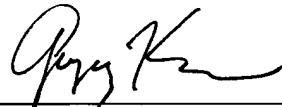
Summary

The Applicant submits that the foregoing amendments and remarks overcome the Examiner's rejections. The Applicant therefore submits that the claimed invention is patentable over the cited art, and respectfully requests the Examiner to allow claims 3-9, 11, and 15-25, so that the present Application may issue in a timely manner. If there are any questions concerning this amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/7/05

By:



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